



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Denali National Park & Preserve
Mile 237 Parks Highway
P.O. Box 9
Denali Park, AK 99755

Welcome to Denali National Park and Preserve! This year brings with it a number of significant, long-awaited changes in the park, and a number of challenges as well.

Changes include new facilities, programs and activities to further enrich the Denali experience for those who visit us in person, or who may only experience the park via the internet. This summer's opening of the new Denali Entrance Area Complex will be the culmination of years of planning and hard work by park staff and park partners. The 14,000 square foot Denali Visitor Center, retail sales and food court building, shuttle bus stop and restroom facility will open in May, with a grand opening event scheduled for August 16. Combined with the educational opportunities offered through the Murie Science and Learning Center, which opened last year, the expanded services and activities available at the rejuvenated site will provide visitors with a much deeper understanding of the park and will strengthen their Denali experience.

The replacement of the Eielson Visitor Center will get underway as soon as road conditions allow access to the site. Improvements to the Toklat Rest Stop are expected to be completed in June, and temporary facilities there will provide visitor services while Eielson is being rebuilt. When completed in 2008, the expanded and enhanced Eielson Visitor Center will provide long-needed services to the growing number of visitors traveling into the park, which include additional indoor and outdoor viewing areas, new exhibits, interior eating space and space for interpretive programs. It will remain a simple, low key outpost along the Denali Park Road, a model of environmentally sensitive construction and sustainable design.

Providing better visitor facilities is important. But along with that comes the challenges of finding ways to manage the increasing demand for the Denali Park experience without damaging fragile park resources and destroying the special wilderness qualities that visitors come here to experience. The Parks Highway opened in 1972, bringing the promise of major increases in visitors and traffic. Park managers established a bus system to meet the need for visitors who wished to travel into the park to access the wilderness and view the wildlife the park was set aside to protect. Vehicle limits on the park road, and the combination of shuttle buses and organized tours have provided a superlative park experience for millions of visitors.

However, portions of the park's bus system will likely reach capacity within the next few years. Increasing the number of buses to meet demand could adversely impact the quality of the experience and the resources that the park is tasked with protecting. Research on road capacity impacts is underway, and park managers are working with other interested parties to address the issue. We are exploring alternatives to the park road experience, including developing new facilities on the south side of the park.

We consider it an honor to be tasked with the preservation and protection of this treasure called

Denali National Park and Preserve. It is here for your enjoyment this summer, and it is the legacy we will leave for the enjoyment of future generations. Please experience the park safely and treat it with great care. Thank you for your interest in Denali and its future!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul R. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "A".